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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [AO](#)
SUBJECT: SURVEY TAKES ANGOLA'S POLITICAL PULSE

REF: LUANDA 257

Classified By: Charge Jeff Hawkins, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: On April 18, International Republican Institute (IRI) Country Officer Lazar Antonic presented to post the results of a USAID-funded public opinion survey that was conducted in seven of Angola's 18 provinces from December 2008 to January 2009. The survey showed that solid majorities of Angolans believe the country is headed in the right direction, favor additional elections at the local, regional, and presidential levels, and consider the level of corruption in Angola to be either "high" or "very high." Angolans rated jobs, poverty, education, health and sanitation, and water as their five greatest daily concerns. While the survey shows broad public support for the MPLA, the MPLA's election-day tally was higher than the tally of self-reported votes by a statistically-significant 10 percent margin. End summary.

12. (C) Public sections of the report indicated that, in general, Angolans are happy with the direction in which the country is going and credit the provincial and national governments for improvements in infrastructure and quality of life. Angolans rated jobs, poverty, education, health and sanitation, and water as their five greatest daily concerns. Of survey participants who voted, 70.4% of those who voted reported confidence that the elections were free and fair, with the remaining voters citing last-minute changes by the National Electoral Commission, unequal opportunities for parties to campaign, and doubts that votes were counted fairly as their main complaints. The confidential section of the survey suggested that Angolans have favorable views of President dos Santos (81.2%), the GRA (83.2%), and provincial government (81.6%). Fewer respondents had favorable views of opposition figures like UNITA President Isaias Samakuva (42.5%) and other MPLA figures.

13. (C) Confidential sections of the survey results showed a small--but statistically significant--10 percent difference between self-reported votes and the results of September 2008 legislative elections. Some 72.3% said they voted for the MPLA in the survey, whereas the MPLA won 81.6% at the national level on election day. Antonic (protect) told PolOff that this information was limited to the confidential section of the report, because IRI prohibits the public release of data from which the validity of election results could be inferred. As a policy, Antonic said, IRI does not release the SPSS files or raw data from which the survey reports are generated. Interpreting the difference between the election day tally and the albeit non-nationally representative survey results, Antonic said that the survey data supported the contention that the voter registration process was fair to members of all parties, but it suggested--in line with complaints from the opposition and civil society--some votes may have been lost on election day as ballots were disqualified and later during the closed tabulation process.

¶4. (C) A full 69.8% of Angolans surveyed believed that presidential elections should take place in 2009. The participants favored democratization in other areas by wide margins, including the direct election of governors and municipal administrators (67.9%) and public broadcast of sessions of parliament (77.3%). A full 79.2% indicated that the level of corruption in Angola is either high or very high and named the national government (23.9%), citizens (13.8%), the president (12.9%), and provincial governments (11.8%) as those responsible for the problem. An even half of Angolans surveyed held a favorable opinion of the United States and only 22.6% held unfavorable opinions.

¶5. (C) Comment: The survey results suggest opportunities for U.S. engagement in several areas. Given strong feelings about corruption, there may be more space for a public dialogue on transparency and reduction of petit corruption than previously believed. The statistically significant difference in self-reported votes and the election tally, though not strictly comparable, is also a strong reason to push for more transparency in future elections. Additionally, strong support for public broadcast of sessions of parliament could provide an effective avenue for post advocacy with the National Assembly. Post believes that in Angola's restricted media environment, such broadcasts would offer a unique opportunity to increase the visibility and weight of the opposition. End comment.
HAWKINS